

THE LOG



TOC H L.W.H.

March, 1941

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THE LOG

The Monthly News Sheet of the Toc H League of Women Helpers

All opinions are welcomed. The Editor is not necessarily

in agreement with the views of contributors.

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"The Vision Seen . . ."

An Impression of the Central Council, 1941

As brisk as bees, if not altogether as light as fairies, did the 43 Councillors assemble at 42, Trinity Square, for the 15th Annual Council Meeting of L.W.H. True, this was a very small number compared with previous years, but as the General Secretary said, there were good reasons why the absentees could not come, and it was splendid that we were able to hold the Council at all. We were delighted to see the Founder-Pilot, and to have her with us at the meeting.

When we were all assembled our first job was to elect a Chairman, and Kathleen Owen was chosen. The Ceremony of Light followed with special remembrance of members and friends who had lost their lives through the war. Then came the pleasant formality of welcoming our guests—Lady Plumer, Dallas Ralph (Hon. General Secretary of Toc H) and our own Regional Staff. The Chairman also welcomed the Coventry members who are carrying on courageously in spite of the loss of their Talbot House. We remembered the hostellers of New June who have also lost their home, and the Chairman read a letter from Padre Michael Coleman, in which he said:

"During the past twelve months when so

much has happened, and there has been so much difficulty and some degree of danger, all your folk, both in Crutched Friars House and New June, have been of the greatest help in every way. . . I think it's true to say that there has been more close co-operation between the Houses on the Hill than ever before, and I am very grateful for the backing you have given. The folk who now remain are the very people who have helped to form what has become a happy family. We have done so much together, in worship and prayer and study and work. . . I hope, therefore, very much, that we may all continue to act, whenever occasion is necessary, having come to some common mind."

Matters Arising brought us into a lengthy discussion on General Membership, but in the end it was agreed that the Scheme was to remain as at present constituted. General Members are therefore to be attached either to the Central General Branch or to Area General Branches. The other matter left over from the 1938 Council was the appointment of a Headquarters Padre, but this was held over again until next year.

The 1941-2 Central Executive was then elected, and on the recommendation of the former Committee, 11 places were filled without the usual division into London and Country Members. The appointments of the General Secretary and

the Hon. Treasurer were then confirmed, and Helen Benbow and Mrs. Horne were thanked for their untiring work for L.W.H. The healthy condition of our finances this year was in startling contrast to last year's deficit, and special congratulation was due to Mrs. Horne and to the membership for their loyalty in maintaining their self-assessment contributions.

The Annual Report and Accounts for 1939/40 and the Budget for 1941 were then passed, and the Council prepared to discuss the two resolutions which had been proposed. The first was the shortening of the probationary period, and the other, the lowering of the age of admission to membership. After a preliminary discussion, the Council adjourned for prayers.

The Founder-Padre was in the Chapel of "42," and joined with us in the beautiful Litany read by Padre Cyril Pearson. The flood-lit altar with its tall vases of golden daffodils was set in the room where William Penn is believed to have been born. And as we "studied to be quiet," in the old Quaker phrase, a sense of power flooded the little room. We gave thanks that although our buildings may be destroyed, the spirit of Toc H marches on. We remembered suffering people in our own and in all countries, and were linked in thought with Toc H throughout the world. New groups in Sydney, Australia, and in Santiago, South America, canteens and service clubs, especially the work for native troops in Nairobi—phrase by phrase the picture built up before us. There suddenly flashed to my mind some words of Jim Burford—part of what was virtually his last message to Toc H:

"Toc H is different from other societies only in so far and in as much as the men who are Toc H see deeper, feel deeper and dig deeper than the mere creature comforts of other men. The vision seen, the will aroused, the burning pulsating enthusiasm of the seer must be real and passed on to (burnt into if you like) the other men who are as fuel for the fires of God."

A truly memorable Lunch followed, provided by a gallant band of helpers, and afterwards we went back to our resolutions. The final result was that in future

the period of probation is left to the unit executive to decide, and that members may be admitted at the age of 17.

Mac spoke to us for all too short a time, but as "ferry loupers" we enjoyed her vivid sketches of Orkney and the Orcadians. But first she told us how glad she was to be with us, and to find life going on so steadily and cheerfully. Our thoughts were turned to the Old House and to All Hallows—now both destroyed. In the ruins of our Guild Church there was a parable, for the sturdy pillars still remained, and stood whitened by the fires. Our fellowship is going through fiery trials, but we have faith that it will emerge strengthened and purified, like those pillars of the glorious new building which is to be.

For the last half-an-hour, we had the joy of welcoming the Founder-Padre. He, too, told us about Orkney and paid tribute to Mac's work at Kirkwall. At least, he said she was at the top of her form and he, and everyone else, was terrified of her. Tubby then produced a book from under his arm in which, he said, he had been searching for spiritual uplift for us. It was a history of Henry VIII and his six wives, and we were rather taken aback to find that the passage most appropriate for us was a vivid description of Anne of Cleves, the ugly wife, whom the King ungallantly described as the "Flanders mare." However, later on, Tubby was kind enough to explain privately that the point about Anne was that the Flanders mare is an indispensable asset in a Flemish household. It shoulders the burdens, does the work and (unlike Anne) is very strong and beautiful to look upon!

The Padre jumped characteristically to Christiana of "Pilgrims' Progress" and then reminded us of one of the secrets of constant faith. "To be anxious about nothing is to be prayerful about everything." And so, with many incidents from his own experience told by the way, he led our thoughts to Toc H, the great Christian family. He was rejoiced at the tremendous act of co-operation which this war had brought, and looked forward to

a future in which a united fellowship would harness the energies of men and women to constructive ends—together creating a home for this homeless generation.

Homegoing Prayers were followed by tea and buns, and then we had to say goodbye to old friends and new, and set off home through the black-out.

The trains were dark and cold. In one corner of the carriage two people compared notes about bombed houses. Opposite them, some soldiers discussed gas-mask drill with enthusiasm. In the dim light my note-book seemed covered with meaningless scrawls which I should never be able to read. Had the Council

meant anything? Has Toc H any real concern, not only with Eternal Realities, but with grim necessities of 1941? I closed my notebook with a snap, and a piece of paper fluttered out. It was apparently someone's favourite quotation, scribbled out, and passed over to me at some previous meeting.

"Life has to go on, and there must be something to keep it going. The positive spring of human life is faith, a passionate sense of the reality and significance of life. If that fails, then people fall back—they are bound to fall back—upon the negative spring of life which is fear. As faith leaves us, fear takes its place as the governor of life."

The positive spring of human life is *faith*. My question was answered. B.C.

NEWS AND NOTES

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The first meeting of the newly elected Central Executive Committee was held at St. John's Wood on February 8th, and was followed by informal discussion of ideas and plans. Kathleen Owen (Wimbledon) has been elected Chairman, and the other members of the Committee are as follows:—

Miss A. B. S. Macfie (Founder Pilot);
Mrs. E. L. Horne (Hon. Treasurer);
Miss Jean Baxter (Westminster);
Lady Brooke-Popham (Central General);
Miss Betty Curtayne (Editor of "The Log");
Mrs. N. K. Edwards (Correspondent for

Canada);

Mrs. Ellison (Correspondent for S. Africa);
Miss M. A. Garfitt (Fleetwood, Lanes.);
Miss Betty Kern (Surbiton);
Miss Ruth Okell (Doncaster, Yorks);
Miss Mary Rushworth (Crutched Friars

House);

Miss Jane Welch (E.C. and Tower Hill);
Miss Helen Benbow (General Secretary).

In addition the Committee have co-opted Miss Dorothy Leimon (Leatherhead) and Miss Mary Wilkinson (Bedford). We are especially glad to welcome the new out-of-London members on the Committee.

CRUTCHED FRIARS HOUSE. We have always been grateful to our voluntary helpers at Headquarters without whom our work could not have been done. Now many of them are scattered and are unable to give the help that we have so much appreciated. Can any others come forward to take their place? We need helpers at the Lunch Club each day from 12—2.30, and others upstairs at Headquarters to

help with records, "Log" preparation and despatch, and so on. Please get in touch with Helen Benbow if you are able to offer your help.

SOUTH AFRICA. Further news has come from Elsie Potter telling us about the successful opening of the first Women's Services Club in Pretoria. L.W.H. has now been asked to undertake the organising of similar Clubs throughout Southern Africa, and a financial appeal has been launched by Her Excellency Lady Duncan. This work may have far-reaching developments, and we send Elsie our best wishes and await further news with interest.

WAKEFIELD Toc H and L.W.H. send news of the opening of their Talbot House. We hope to publish an account of it later in our "Work of Friendship" series. Meanwhile, we send them our good wishes for this new venture.

ORKNEY. Mac writes: I would like to send a message of grateful appreciation of all the thoughts and help which come to us in Orkney from L.W.H. all over the world. It is a real encouragement in what is now a rather isolated post, to feel that the interest of so many is supporting our work. It thrills us all up here to be kept warm by a bed-cover knitted in Australia or Canada; to have cigarettes provided by gifts from South America or South Africa, and to receive woollies—marvellous warm stockings, socks and jerseys!—from places which might be the homes of any of our patients, and to devour the varied literature which arrives in bulky but welcome parcels. So—please, dear Editor, make it a big—

THANK YOU ALL.

ROUND THE REGIONS—No. 8

SOUTH-EASTERN AREA

This Area has been through some very difficult days since news was last sent in to "The Log," but wherever evacuation has not made it impossible, meetings still continue to inspire and strengthen the members in a very real sense of fellowship.

Kent has temporarily had to abandon its District Team although it is encouraging to know that one Rushlight has been able to be returned to a coastal town that previously had not dared to risk keeping it. The three inland Units are carrying on bravely although with small numbers.

Sussex has been more fortunate. Steady pre-war building is standing the test of war strain well and the District Team is able to give help and guidance. West Surrey has benefited from contact with

members from a London District and they have done some sound thinking and planning together. The District Team meets regularly, and plans are being made for a Training Week-end to be held in the Spring.

When all England is doing its utmost to help with every need that becomes known, it seems pointless to say that L.W.H. in the Area is doing likewise. What does seem worth while to remark on is that in spite of countless difficulties some real constructive thinking is being done. Area folk, scattered as they are all over the country, write encouraging letters of the strength they have found to deal with their problems of loneliness, etc., which has had its origin in pre-war inspiration through Toc H.

H.M.K.

YORK HOUSE, FELLING

1940 at York House finished up on a very happy note. In spite of the war and present conditions and the great difficulties of rationing, Christmas festivities were held as in previous years. On the 20th December 80 women club members met together for their party, which consisted of tea, sandwiches, cakes and trifles, followed by games, competitions and dancing. The food was all prepared by the members' committee and a voluntary worker played the piano for the games and dancing.

Two children's parties were held, one

on the 21st December when 70 children were present, and the other on January 11th, when we had 75 children.

The parties were thoroughly enjoyed by all and did much to make people, for a short time, forget the worries and difficulties of war, bringing together many club members at a time when friendship and goodwill prevails.

May we thank all those L.W.H. members who so kindly sent subscriptions and gifts and thus made these parties not only possible but so enjoyable.

The Rock . . .

Friends, keep on the Rock, for there is Safety.

And the Sun shines, and the Light is clear,

and not dim, that you may see your Way and Life,

though there is a storm and Tempest in the Sea.

And so mind the Summer, and singing of birds; and

not the Winter and Night, in which evil beasts

do yell . . . And the Rock remaineth.

—George Fox, 1669

TOC H AND THE COMMUNITY

No. 2

by Jean Baxter

In the previous article in this series I finished up with a quotation of Chesterton's—"I do not believe in a fate that falls on men however they act; I do believe in a fate that falls on them unless they act." This is particularly applicable to those of us who would call ourselves Christians. It is a familiar criticism of Christianity that it is "too other-worldly." The critic will tell you that we are always ready with high-sounding phrases about "loving our neighbours" and "doing unto others," but that when it comes to putting these precepts into practice, we manage to wriggle out of it by saying—"Of course one can't really act quite like that. Christianity is idealistic, it isn't meant to be carried out literally . . ." Or else we say that if only everybody would try to put it into effect, we wouldn't mind trying it ourselves, but it would be useless as things are at present, with people like Hitler and Mussolini in the world.

If Christians are going to adopt this attitude it seems to me that it is time we dropped the Christian label altogether, and ruled our lives by other standards. It is simply hypocrisy to claim to be a Christian if when we are required to give practical expression to our beliefs we modify them to fit the circumstances. Some men and women who have had the honesty to recognise this have rejected the Christian faith completely. The majority of us have found it easier to compromise—and have sought to interpret Christianity so as to make it fit in with our own desires.

Young people to whom Christianity might have had a vivid appeal have felt little attraction towards it because they have so rarely seen it in the lives of those who profess to believe in it. We cannot be surprised that so many of them have

turned away and sought satisfaction in other faiths. Communism and Fascism have claimed the allegiance of many, and have temporarily provided an antidote to the feeling of futility which the lack of a religious faith produces. Youth is eager to make sacrifices, and to live dangerously, but the watered-down brand of Christianity of which there is so much evidence to-day has not provided any inspiration.

Membership of Toc H has awakened in many people a desire to give practical expression to their Christian belief. They have developed a social consciousness and have realised their obligations to their fellow men and women. Through fellowship, through service and by the integrity of its members Toc H seeks to demonstrate a passionate conviction in the truth of Christianity. How are we to measure the value of the contribution we make to the community? If that contribution is only in the nature of service, then Toc H has failed in its purpose. It seems to me that our most vital contribution to society must be that of a witness, a loyalty to the fundamental truth which is set forth in the Main Resolution:

"... behind the ebb and flow of things temporal, stand the eternal realities."

The value of Toc H as a movement rests upon its ability to remain true to its central purpose, which is thus defined as clearly as is possible through the medium of language. In the years to come this underlying purpose may be fulfilled to an extent of which we have not dreamed. The destruction of the Old House in Poperinghe where Toc H was born is symbolical; now more surely than ever it is vital that Toc H should look with clear vision to the future, and prepare to play its part in the building of a community of men and women with a deeper sense of their Christian responsibility.

THE WORK OF FRIENDSHIP . . . No. 6

TALBOT HOUSE; WOKING

So it's something about our House in Woking that you want me to tell you? Well, I'm no great shakes at writing articles, so this will have to do instead.

It's a quiet evening to-night, for a lot of our old habitués have been drafted elsewhere. I am sitting in my lair at the end of the passage, watching the lads in ones and twos dropping in and out of the dining-room. The L.W.H. shift—as it happens to be this evening—are slipping plates of sausages and chips, of salmon pie, of beans on toast, across the passage from the kitchen to the dining-room hatch.

I write to the beautiful cadences of Debussy's "Nuages" on the wireless. In the Lounge they have the Forces programme on, but many of the folk who come to this house prefer straight music to jazz.

The work in this house increases steadily week by week, as it becomes better known. It used to be mostly local folk who came, but nowadays we are getting people from much farther afield. There have been soldiers and airmen from fifteen or twenty miles away, and even sailors from Portsmouth, for a night's comfort and rest.

Nearly everyone who comes in says that he likes the place, because he feels that it's homely. This is partly due to the fact that the house itself is a good, well-built homely sort of house. But much more, I am sure, to the cheerful and informal spirit in which all the work is done. As often as not, there'll be a couple or more of Services men in the kitchen or scullery lending a helping hand, and there's always plenty of good-humoured banter between kitchen and dining-room.

Nor is our house confined to men. Quite often we have Army and Air Force women dropping in. Actually, we don't see as much of them as we would like. Nor have we had a representative of the W.R.N.S. as yet. But we have plans afoot which will, I think, bring more women

into the House.

You ask me specially what part the L.W.H. are playing in the House. Now that's a very difficult question to answer, because, you see, apart from them the House would hardly be able to carry on at all. It is L.W.H. who form the backbone of the work in the kitchen and dining-room. It is L.W.H. who turn up for the whist-drives and other entertainments, and generally turn all our activities into a family affair.

After all, there's really one thing, and one thing only, which Houses like this can provide, and which is so difficult to come by anywhere else. It is the sense of close-knittedness, of personal relationship, of give and take, of working in together, free from all compulsion and restraint, which one can only call the "family spirit." And, as you know, that spirit is created not so much by what one says or does, as by how one says or does it. Well, that's just what the L.W.H. are doing, week by week, in this place. A meal can be just a meal, or worse, if served up along with over-cold ice or over-hot sauce. But when served with a friendly laugh and a jolly retort, it transcends being a mere meal and becomes a blessing.

Every room in our House is a used room. The Lounge with its comfy chairs and sofas, wireless, and big open fire is very popular. The writing-room-cum-library is much used and many a letter has been written in the quiet there, which could hardly have been written elsewhere. The Games room, with its card tables, piano, gramophone, and inevitable darts board, is in pretty constant demand. The bath-room turns out some half-a-dozen clean outer-mans every day. At a quarter to nine each evening about the same number (though sometimes many more) gather in the Chapel upstairs to make an act of remembrance for the work of the House and for the needs of all mankind.

We are well under way with the fine spacious garden at the back of the House. The work is done by a good friend of ours who sports a military uniform, but whose flesh and blood is that of an expert gardener. We've already had our first crop of cress, the snowdrops are poking their little green noses up through

the earth, and throughout the summer we should have a magnificent display of flowers.

Here I must end for sheer lack of time. All good wishes to "The Log."

RUPERT BLISS, Warden.

[The next article in this series will be on the work of New June, London.]



MARCH 25th is LADY DAY

A Message from the Founder-Pilot

Lady Day is kept by L.W.H. throughout the world as a day of Corporate Communion and re-dedication.

Lady Day and our Corporate Communion will soon be here. The first L.W.H. Communion took place at All Hallows soon after the Founder-Padre became its Vicar. There was only a handful of members present, for the night before had been a noisy one, a terrific thunderstorm keeping us all awake. After the Service we crossed the road to our friend the A.B.C. for breakfast.

At breakfast, someone remarked that she loved a good thunderstorm. But Tubby and others, with indelible impressions of recent events across the Channel, replied that it had been too much like a bombardment to be really comfortable.

And now, in 1941, the storm has indeed broken—over the friendly A.B.C., over All Hallows and Toc H, over our country, over the world. Smoke and dust rise from the ruins, the wind whistles through the shells of burnt-out buildings. Yet life stirs and shows itself by work. Already

plans are afoot to use a corner of All Hallows for the worship which has not ceased there for more than twelve hundred years. There, where the Toc H lamp still burns in the Undercroft, we seek to make the ruins an inspiration towards a noble re-building. And through the work and fellowship of the War comes a new understanding, growing into new hopes and schemes for a better world order.

So we come to Lady Day once more. For on March 25th, in that unity of spirit which may be ours however separated in time and space, L.W.H. will be gathering in little groups all over the world. It is here at our Lord's Feet that we must lay the whole problem, offering ourselves and our family of Toc H more fully to Him, determined to do our part in faith and courage to the best of our ability, but leaving Him to plan the whole picture by fitting each tiny part of the mosaic into its proper place. A.B.S.M.

Magnificat Anima Mea Dominum

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